

A Short History
of
St. Michael's Church
Germantown



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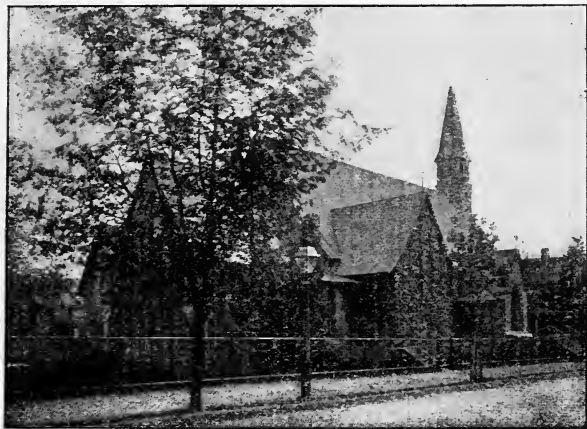
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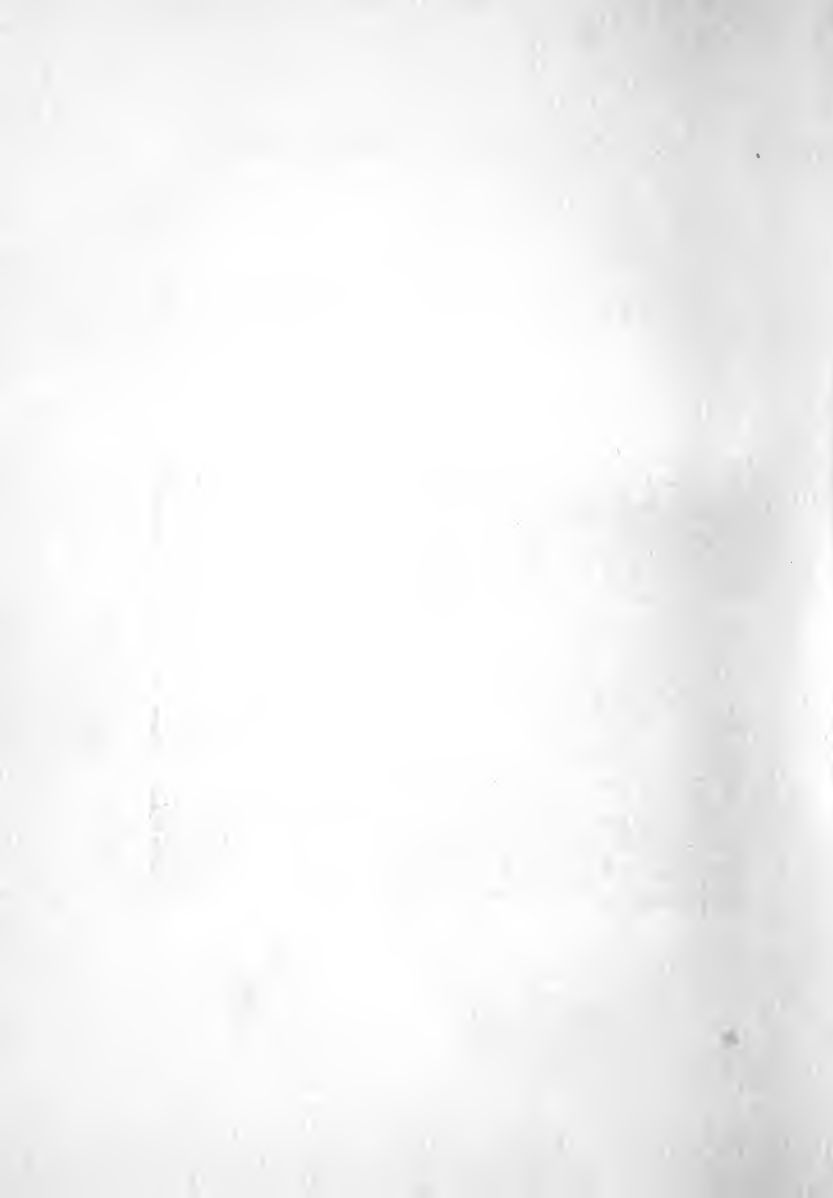
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A SHORT HISTORY
OF
ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH
GERMANTOWN



BY
MARY E. PANCOAST



DEDICATED TO
ALL WHO HAVE LOVED AND LABOURED FOR
St. Michael's

*St. Michael's Rectory, Germantown,
October 31, 1902.*

*The History of St. Michael's Parish has been written
by Miss Mary E. Pancoast at my request. The work has
been carefully and faithfully done, and it has my cordial
indorsement.*

*ARNOLD HARRIS HORD,
Rector, St. Michael's Church,
Germantown, Philadelphia.*

A SHORT HISTORY
OF
ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH,
GERMANTOWN.

THE following brief sketch of St. Michael's Parish is taken from the records, Minutes of the Vestry, and letters, which have been preserved with great care from the very beginning of its history.

It is hoped that it may prove of interest not only to those to whom the story of the early struggles and life of the Parish may be more or less familiar, but also to those who now have the privilege of working in and for it, in its years of greater and enlarged usefulness and more assured well-being.

The earliest record is dated December 15, 1858, when "the friends of the proposed Protestant Episcopal Church in the upper part of the town" met together at the house of Mr. H. A. Shackelford, Main Street, nearly opposite the Town Hall. The "friends" here specified had been for a short time in the habit of attending services at a small

schoolhouse on Queen Lane, conducted by the Rev. J. Pinckney Hammond, who came from St. James the Less to organize a Parish, to be called "The Church of the Holy Cross." The site chosen for this church was on the corner of Coulter and Wayne streets, but the enterprise never got any further than the laying of the corner-stone. Various difficulties prevented its completion.

At this meeting there were present Rev. Mr. Hammond, Messrs. Samuel Cox, John M. Gummey, H. A. Shackleford, George C. Lambdin, and Henry R. Gummey. After the meeting was organized, a letter was read from Miss Elizabeth C. Morris, as follows :—

"Whereas, my friend and pastor, the Rev. J. Pinckney Hammond, has stated to me that it is his earnest wish to organize in the neighbourhood of High Street, a new Parish, to belong to the Communion of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and to build a church on the Free Seat principle; and whereas, it is my sincere desire to aid in carrying out so laudable an undertaking; I do hereby promise to give, in aid of the said object, a Lot, on the southeast side of the said High Street, having a front on High Street of not less than 150 feet, and a depth of about 120 feet. The said Lot to be given on the following conditions, viz.: That such a Vestry shall be formed as shall be satisfac-

tory to the Rev. Mr. Hammond; that the said Vestry shall undertake to erect, within a reasonable time, a suitable building, as a place of public worship for members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, all seats in said building to be forever free; and that the Rev. Mr. Hammond, if willing to accept the office, shall be the first Rector of the said Parish. The Lot will be conveyed to the said Vestry, immediately on my receiving from the Rev. Mr. Hammond a written communication informing me that a satisfactory Vestry has been organized and incorporated.

“(Signed) ELIZABETH C. MORRIS.”

In his book on “The German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania,” published in 1895, Julius Friedrich Sachse gives an interesting account of the early history of the piece of ground offered by Miss Morris to the Vestry. Dr. Sachse points out that the sect of the Pietists, or Theosophical Brethren, was originally founded in America in 1694, by Johann Kelpius, sometimes known as the Hermit of the Wissahickon, from the fact of his dwelling-place being a cave near the place where Rittenhouse Street now joins the Wissahickon Drive. Kelpius was a mystic, and Dr. Sachse gives us many strange and interesting details concerning his life and writings. The last of his fol-

lowers was Dr. Christopher Witt, or de Witt, as it is sometimes found written, who was himself a very remarkable man. Besides being a physician of some note, he was an excellent botanist, and brought many seeds and roots from the Old World to the New; an artist; and a man of much general information. He gave the lot on which St. Michael's now stands, to the Warmer or Warner family, to be set apart as a burial place "for the Brethren who should die in the vicinity." Dr. Witt was himself buried there, in January, 1765, "just as the winter sun sank beneath the horizon." "This piece of ground on the hilltop," so Sachse goes on to tell us, "was originally forty feet square, stepped out and consecrated according to the Mystic ritual."¹

Many are the vicissitudes which have passed over this little plot during the past two centuries. For a number of years it was known merely as a private burying ground; at one time it was used by the Moravian Brethren. Four generations of the Warner family are known to have been buried here, and also other members of the little fraternity known as the Theosophical Community, and a few stones bearing the names of Jonathan Werner and of Christopher Warner may be found close to the

¹ See "German Pietists of Provincial Pennsylvania," pp. 419 *et seq.*, for a fuller account of this place.

chancel of St. Michael's Church, under the shade of the old mulberry tree. This tree, which is still flourishing, was planted by Dr. Physick, who at that time was anxious to introduce silk manufacture into Germantown. He built what was called the *Cocoonery* on Morton Street, above Herman, with every accommodation for the silkworm, and a fine row of mulberry trees still marks the spot, though no trace of the old building now remains.

The ceremonies of the Mystics at the time of burial were peculiar to their sect, and may have given rise to the many stories of ghosts and spectres which began to be told by the neighbours about this peaceful spot, which was at this time surrounded by a low stone wall. One custom in especial has a significance and beauty which make it worthy of record. At the moment when the body was lowered into the ground a white bird was released to fly away from the open grave into the sky above. As the burials always took place just at the setting of the sun we can easily picture to ourselves the singular beauty of the scene on the hilltop. After the battle of Germantown the old burial ground was again used as a place of interment, and a number of soldiers, both British and Hessian, are said to have there found their graves.

But as time went on, and Germantown grew and became more thickly settled, the Warner property,

like so many others, was divided into lots and sold, care being taken, however, to preserve intact the old cemetery, known at that time as "Mount Misery."

Sachse tells us, furthermore, that "Dr. Christopher Witt had ordained that the whole top of the hill adjoining the enclosure should be given free, for the purpose of building a meeting-house, to any Protestant denomination that should make demand," but no organization seems ever to have availed itself of the offer, and the ground and its surroundings were left to sink more and more into a state of ruinous decay. But when the estate was divided and sold, this lot, together with that on which the old Warner dwelling-house stood, came into possession of the Morris family, a descendant of which was, as it seemed, destined unknowingly to fulfil the wishes of Dr. Witt in her gift of the lot to the parish about to be formed.

Miss Morris's offer was at once gratefully accepted, and its terms and conditions, exactly as set forth in this letter, appear in the deed of gift.

A Vestry was elected, consisting of Messrs. Samuel Cox, H. A. Shackleford, E. R. Cope, Joseph Welsford, John M. Gummey, George C. Lambdin, E. F. Shoenberger, William L. Shaffer, and Henry R. Gummey, and the Rev. J. Pinckney Hammond was unanimously elected Rector of the

new Parish, to be known henceforth as ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF GERMANTOWN. The Vestry met again three days later, when a committee was appointed to obtain a Charter, and to prepare a Code of By-Laws. A building committee was also appointed at this meeting, and Mr. Charles S. Pancoast was unanimously elected a member of the Vestry.

The work now began in earnest. A Charter and By-Laws were adopted January 3, 1859, and plans for a church edifice were obtained from several architects, the one chosen being made by Mr. Frederic C. Withers, of New York, "provided the church can be built from this plan for a sum not exceeding \$4000." This was afterwards found to be impossible, and a bid of \$5500 was accepted, April 11, 1859, at which time also, on motion of Mr. Charles S. Pancoast, the Vestry adopted a seal, bearing the device of a Latin floriated cross, with a circle surrounded by the words, "St. Michael's Church, Germantown," as the Seal of the Corporation.

So the business part of the enterprise began. The Minutes, while they record in full the struggles and the many difficulties which attended the raising of money for the erection of the church, fail to tell us of the faithful work undertaken and accomplished by the ardent and zealous Rector, and his little company of devoted fellow-labourers, in a

neighbourhood where the need was great, and in a community where rich and poor alike were ready for just such inspiration as they found then and there.

Begun in April, 1859,¹ it was the great wish of the Rector that the first service should be held on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, of the same year, and with much difficulty this was accomplished. As the pews were not all finished, chairs were carried from the house of the Rector's Warden, Mr. J. M. Gummey, on East Walnut Lane, across the open lots which then intervened between it and the church, while in the back part of the building a temporary flooring of rough boards was laid for the occasion.

St. Michael's was thus opened for its first service on St. Michael's Day, 1859, and although its consecration could not then take place, because of a mortgage of \$5000 resting upon it, the debt was felt by all to be an incentive to exertion, and everyone, men, women, and children, were alike anxious to work for its extinguishment. A "Ladies' Society" was formed, which undertook to pay the interest on the mortgage, and also, if possible, to aid in the yearly reduction of its principal.

¹ The first sod was turned April 18, 1859. On April 29 Bishop Bowman laid the corner-stone, and on September 29, just five months later, the first service was held.

The Rector set his people the example of constant and untiring work. Believing, as he did, in the strict observance of the services as ordered by the Prayer Book, he at once instituted the celebration of the Holy Eucharist on all Sundays and Holy Days throughout the year, and the Order for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer was always read, though he himself had to open the church twice a day, as the finances did not admit of the services of a sexton, except on Sundays. Mr. Hammond's sermons, too, were of a kind to attract many to whom his manner of preaching was a novelty. Plain, direct, and practical, it was not his fault if those who listened were not well grounded in the "Faith once delivered to the Saints," or were ignorant of what it meant to be a member of the Holy Catholic Church. He was always ready to further, if not to originate, any plan for the decoration and beautifying of the church, and he believed most intensely in using every means to increase the reverent and beautiful rendering of the services. The white altar cloth, now so familiar in all our churches, was first used in Germantown, at St. Michael's, during his Rectorship. It was a thing not of beauty, but of terror, to many of the good people about us, and when it was followed by the proper colours for the different seasons of the Church Year, St. Michael's was by some considered

fast becoming Romanized in outward appearance, if not in inward practices. The use of flowers for church decoration was also little known among us at that time. It was on Easter Day, 1860, that they were first used at St. Michael's, to make the church more fair and beautiful for the great Central Feast of the year.

The font was filled with apple blossoms and violets, and surmounted by a small cross of the same flowers, which had been gathered and brought in by some of the children, eager to have a share in the work. It is curious to recollect, as do some of us, what a widespread commotion their introduction occasioned in *every one* of the other Episcopal churches in Germantown. Perhaps, as we compare the present with the past, we may realize that in Germantown, St. Michael's was the leader in many observances which have grown, in one generation, to be the universal custom among us. The music was under the supervision of the Rector, who was himself the Choir-master, and whose beautiful and musical voice will never be forgotten by those who heard it. The organ, a small one, not new, was put in its place in May, 1860, and did good service until replaced, November 4, 1875, by the one now in use. Before the acquisition of the organ, the church had the use of a small melodeon, kindly lent by Mr. Gummey. The musical

part of the service was a great attraction. The Psalter was chanted antiphonally at Evening Prayer on Sundays — another dangerous innovation which we all greatly enjoyed.

But the spiritual work of the Parish was not neglected. A Sunday School was started, held of necessity in the church, which grew rapidly. Confirmation classes were organized, and, in order to interest some of the people of the neighbourhood who never went to church, cottage lectures were instituted, and most successfully carried on. These consisted of a brief service, largely musical, held in one of the houses, by the Rector and a few friends; and many were thus attracted who were not as yet willing to go into a church.

In October, 1859, the Rector appointed the Rev. T. Gardiner Littell, then newly ordained Deacon, to be his assistant. Mr. Littell was a nephew of Miss Morris, the donor of the land on which the church was built, and it was his father, Mr. John S. Littell, whose generous offer of a loan of \$5000 had made it possible to hasten the completion of the work upon the church. The Rev. Mr. Littell continued in the Parish until April 3, 1861. During his stay at St. Michael's he had been advanced to the Priesthood, and he left with "the cordial good wishes of the Vestry for his success in founding his new Parish at Oak Lane," now

known as the House of Prayer, Branchtown. On June 19, 1860, Mr. Hammond was instituted Rector of St. Michael's, according to the form prescribed by the Prayer Book. The service was a very beautiful and solemn one, many of the clergy of the neighbourhood being present.

For nearly a year after this, the growth of the Parish was steadily advancing. The Ladies' Association which had undertaken to pay the interest on the mortgage, also assumed various extra expenses which the Vestry were unable to meet. The Sunday School increased, and the Parish was felt to be thoroughly alive in every department, adding to its numbers, and enlarging the sphere of its influence, perhaps more widely than was realized at the time.

This brings the history of St. Michael's to the troubled period of the Civil War. It was inevitable that so young an enterprise, and one so entirely dependent upon voluntary offerings for its support, should suffer greatly, not only from the universal financial depression, but from the varied shades of feeling which pervaded the entire country, and the shadows that gathered about us seemed to threaten the very life of St. Michael's. In the spring of 1861 Mr. Hammond, finding that the burden of his support had become too great for the struggling Parish, and knowing it to be impos-

sible to meet the needs of his family should his salary be reduced, accepted the position of Chaplain in the Army, and was therefore obliged to resign his Rectorship of St. Michael's Church. His resignation took effect August 8, 1861. It may be appropriate to record here an extract from the Minutes of the Vestry, dated August 13, 1884, immediately after Mr. Hammond's death. It embodies in brief form a record of his work subsequent to his removal from St. Michael's, and it also shows the "affectionate remembrance" in which he was still held, though more than twenty years had passed since he ended his ministrations among us. After the usual preamble the minute is as follows:—

"Dr. Hammond was the founder and first Rector of St. Michael's Church, Germantown. He began his work in this Parish December 5, 1858, by holding services in the Town Hall, and by organizing a congregation on the 15th of the same month in a private house opposite that building. By his energy and resolution ground was broken for a church edifice April 18th of the following year, which was ready for occupancy St. Michael's Day, 1859. By personal and unwearied efforts he succeeded not only in accomplishing this work, but in obtaining large contributions for carrying it forward. He continued zealously serving this flock

of his own gathering and folding until the 8th day of August, 1861, when he resigned his charge to become a Chaplain in the United States Army.

“Twenty-three years have passed away since he left the Parish, but his memory has remained fresh in the hearts of those who then learned to love and value him. He has continued elsewhere the same sort of history he made for himself in this place, ‘setting up houses of God’ in the various parts of the land. He was a self-sacrificing and laborious Christian man, an ardent and devoted minister, a zealous upholder of the principle of a free-seated Church, and a sincere servant of our Blessed Master in every walk of life.”

For more than a year after Mr. Hammond’s resignation, St. Michael’s was without a Rector. The Sunday services were dependent upon weekly supplies, and sometimes upon a lay reader, for the difficulty of obtaining a clergyman was at times very great. On January 29, 1862, the Rev. L. Ward Smith was elected to fill the vacant post. He accepted, and entered upon his duties in July of the same year. Mr. Smith came to the Parish at a time of great difficulty. The differences of opinion, so widely spread over the country, were also felt in the little community, but none could fail to appreciate the gentle courtesy and unfailing interest of the new Rector. Mr. Smith

was unmarried, and possessed of some private means, so that the question of his support did not press so heavily upon the Vestry, his salary being but \$800 a year, much of which he generously gave to different objects in the Parish which stood most in need of help. But this happy state of things was not to last. On November 11, 1863, the Vestry received the resignation of the Rector, "on account of failing health." He died at Germantown, December 23 of the same year, greatly regretted by all. The resolution of the Vestry, passed on Christmas Day, speaks of "his earnest interest in the welfare of the Parish, and his generous liberality, even to the offer of his whole salary, to relieve it under difficulties, which has so endeared him to its members that they feel at his loss the sorrow of warm personal friendship, and not alone regret the severing of the tie of Pastor and people." During Mr. Smith's Rectorship he acted as Chaplain to the Cuyler General Hospital, which had its quarters in the Town Hall of Germantown.

From this time until October, 1864, the Parish was again dependent upon supplies, and the Vestry struggled hard to keep the congregation together. Part of the time they were fortunate in obtaining the services of the Rev. John P. Lundy, who had then lately resigned the Rectorship of Emmanuel Church, Holmesburg, on account of his wife's

health. Mr. Lundy refused the Rectorship of St. Michael's, which was unanimously offered to him, for the same reason, but the Vestry were able to secure his services for some months, during which time he endeared himself to all, and by his most acceptable ministrations, and his remarkable eloquence, helped to build up the congregation, and to establish St. Michael's upon a firmer foothold. It was with great regret that the Vestry were obliged, after repeated efforts, to resign all hopes of his becoming their Rector.

On October 4, 1864, the Rev. Edward Hyde True was elected Rector, and served the Parish until December 31, 1867. During his Rectorship we may mention three important events: the acquisition by St. Michael's of the lot eastward of the Church building, where the Rectory now stands; the Revision of the By-laws; and the introduction of what is known as the envelope system, mentioned in the Minutes as "a plan for obtaining regular and certain weekly subscriptions, to be placed upon the offertory by those who feel they can thus pledge themselves for voluntary contributions." This plan was, we read, "favourably received by the congregation, and adopted by the Vestry." It went into effect Advent Sunday, 1866, and is still continued, with slight alterations in the method, at the present time. It may be of

interest to note that the sum pledged that first year was \$1735.84. The average of the weekly open offertory was \$7 a Sunday. Coal was then \$8.75 a ton, for the war prices still obtained. It is here proper to mention that it was during Mr. True's Rectorship that the first payment upon the principal of the mortgage was made. It was on the First Sunday after Trinity, 1867, that the Vestry received the sum of \$500 from a lady of the congregation, Mrs. James S. Young, accompanied by the following note: "The patient gathering of three years, for the first payment of the mortgage debt of the Church." A second payment of \$500, given by the Ladies' Society of the Parish, is recorded in the Autumn of this year.

We come now to the beginning of the long and faithful Rectorship of the late Rev. John Kemper Murphy, D.D., who from January 1, 1868, to his death, October 20, 1900, a period of nearly thirty-three years, ceased not to minister to the needs of his people, and during this long incumbency the steady, quiet growth of the Parish makes the work of its historian truly a labour of love. Hitherto, the story of St. Michael's has been full of changes, a condition not at any time favourable to growth. Begun just before the opening of the Civil War, dependent entirely upon voluntary offerings, not only

for its support, but also for its very creation, it entered directly upon a troubled period not only of financial but also of mental disturbance, and the wonder is that it survived the storm.

But, in spite of much difference of opinion, and some want of harmony among themselves, the love of the people for their Parish was strong enough to withstand many shocks, and their loyalty to St. Michael's and to its work made them ready, after a time of "storm and stress," gladly to unite again under the wise and firm rule of their new Rector, who, above all else, hated warfare and loved peace.

I here quote a short passage from a sermon preached by Dr. Murphy at the close of the twentieth year of his Rectorship. It gives us a picture of the Church and its surroundings as he found it when he entered upon his duties, January 1, 1868. He described it as "almost painfully bare of everything in the way of outside surroundings, or even of interior fittings and furniture . . . the property enclosed with a low, worn-out wooden fence, and having alongside of it an unsightly lot, most of which was a deep hole of a disused stone quarry, covered with rubbish which was the accumulation of years. . . . There was neither a building for Parish use, other than the Church itself, nor a residence for the Rector, other than some hired house which could be conveniently secured. There was

simply this bare building, encumbered by a debt, to shelter the small but zealous band of worshippers who had learned to love the place as their Church home."

The first committee appointed by the new Rector was one to consider the question of accommodation for the Sunday School, and subsequently the other most pressing needs were taken up, one by one, and supplied as best they could be. On December 30, 1868, the close of the first year of Dr. Murphy's incumbency, the Vestry acknowledged the receipt of \$1500, proceeds of a Fair held by the Ladies' Society of the Parish; this money was to be applied to the rent of the Rectory, and to Church improvements. This was the third Fair which had been held since St. Michael's was founded, just ten years before. The annual payment of the interest on the mortgage, and the reduction of its principal by the efforts of this Society, have been already mentioned. The "improvements" made at this time seem to have been a fence on the High Street front of the property, carpets and cushions for the Church itself, and some other much needed repairs.

In the Autumn of 1869 the Vestry were able to purchase a building on Morton Street below High, formerly owned by Christ Church, and used as a Mission Sunday School. After it came into pos-

session of St. Michael's Parish it was used as a Sunday School and for various other Parish enterprises, until the completion, in April, 1885, of the present Parish House.

The work of the improvement and beautifying of the Church itself, both outside and in, progressed steadily during the next four years. In the spring of 1873, the Altar Cross now in use was given by several gentlemen of the Parish, as a memorial to the Rev. J. Harrison Lambdin. Mr. Lambdin had been a devoted member of St. Michael's since his boyhood. He had recently been ordained Deacon, in which order he was serving the Parish, as Dr. Murphy's assistant, at the time of his death, December 28, 1870. This was the first of a number of memorials given to the Church during Dr. Murphy's Rectorship, which have helped to add to its beauty. Among these may be mentioned the brass pulpit, put in in 1894 in memory of Mrs. John M. Gummey, whose husband was one of the founders of the Parish, and who was herself for many years a constant and faithful attendant at the services; a brass lectern to the memory of Mrs. John T. Mitchell; a brass hymn board, given by the Band of St. Michael to the memory of George Hunter Murphy; and a brass basin and wooden cover for the font, in memory of Mr. Arthur Wells. A tablet in the Sunday School room com-

memorates, at the scene of his labours, Mr. Henry Carvill Lewis, who was so able a Superintendent, and to whose energy and untiring effort we largely owe our present Parish House. Many of the windows are also memorials.

On November 4, 1875, the organ now in use was put in place, to the great satisfaction of the congregation, at a cost of \$2400. It was made by Messrs. Hook & Hastings, of Boston.

During these years, while the work of improving and adding to the Church property and to the Church itself was in full progress, the debt remaining upon the building, which prevented its consecration, was never absent from the minds of the Rector and his people. Whatever else of present needs might claim attention, the work of gathering together the sum to free the Church from the encumbrance of a mortgage was never lost sight of nor interrupted.

On Thursday, May 11, 1876, this work had so far progressed that we find a resolution of the Vestry asking the Rector "to take steps to have the Church consecrated on next St. Michael's Day." Apart from the fact that the first service ever held in the Church was on that Feast, it had grown to be the Parish custom to make Michaelmas a time of special services and of special effort as each year went by, and it was thus felt to be the appropriate

time for the consecration of the Church. The financial report for the year ending May 1, 1876, was unusually hopeful, the total amount raised during that year being \$6682.78. Part of this, of course, was the result of special offerings.

On St. Michael's Day, September 29, 1876, the seventeenth anniversary of the opening of the Church for divine service, the Vestry met before service in the Vestry Room of the Church. There were present at this meeting the Rector, Rev. John K. Murphy, Messrs. Charles F. Gummey, George C. Lambdin, John P. Aertsen, Charles S. Pancoast, William Fraser, Paul Pohl, and John T. Mitchell. Two of these gentlemen, it will be remembered, were among the first Vestry organized in 1858, viz., George C. Lambdin and Charles S. Pancoast.

On motion of Mr. Pancoast it was "resolved that the Rector, Wardens, and Vestrymen execute the instrument of Donation and Request to the Bishop to consecrate the Church required by the Canons, whereupon the same was executed in the usual form."

It is my privilege to be able to quote again from a sermon preached by Dr. Murphy just after the consecration of the Church, which gives us an account of the services upon that occasion. After speaking of the peculiar thankfulness which "we feel at seeing the fulfillment of hopes long deferred,

but ever bravely sustained," he goes on to say, "As the long procession, priestly and lay, entered these courts to take possession of them for the King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts, it seemed like bringing the harvest home." The day itself was lovely, clear and full of sunshine; the Church, made beautiful in every part with a wealth of rich autumn flowers; the chancel, with its white hangings and well-filled altar vases; the attendance of thirty-two clergy, with the Bishop [Stevens] to keep the feast of the dedication; the musical part of the service, so well rendered; the crowded Church and hearty responses of the people, — "all leave the happiest impressions upon the minds of those who shared in them." The Rev. Dr. Hammond, founder of the Parish, stood beside the Rector on that day, and rejoiced with him that all was finally accomplished. "Our best blessing," Dr. Murphy writes in one place, "our best blessing rest upon the children and the women of the Parish, who through all these years were the chief agents under God for the gradual removal of the obstacle that, under the law of the Church, has hindered hitherto the present happy result." This tribute to the women of the Parish is further emphasized by a resolution of thanks passed by the Vestry October 2, 1876, the preamble of which is as follows:—

"Whereas, the consecration of St. Michael's

Church on St. Michael's Day, A.D. 1876, was rendered possible by the energetic and successful efforts of a few of the ladies of the congregation in obtaining during the past year the moneys necessary to pay off the balance of the mortgage debt upon the Church." We may remember, too, that the first payment on this debt was made on receipt of the \$500 given by Mrs. James S. Young, in 1867, and in the nine years that intervened the women of the Parish had never ceased to strive earnestly under one or another's leadership for the attainment of the much-desired end. It was "to Mrs. William T. Murdock and the ladies associated with her" that the Vestry addressed their thanks in 1876.

So long as the mortgage remained unpaid, and the Church, in consequence, unconsecrated, the Vestry had felt that no large enterprise, other than that of raising the money for that one purpose, should be undertaken. But now that the incubus was removed, and no debt remained, the urgent need for a Rectory was the first to be considered.

On March 31, 1880, Mr. Charles S. Pancoast presented to the Vestry a communication from a lady of the congregation, stating that \$1000 had been promised on condition that the Rectory be built during that year. A meeting of the congregation, called to consider the matter, was held

April 6, and the object of the meeting was clearly and very strongly stated by Mr. Charles S. Pancoast, who offered the following resolution :—

“Resolved, that in order the contingent subscription of \$1500¹ should not be lost to the Parish, it is expedient to proceed at once to the building of a Rectory within the present year,” which resolution was unanimously carried. A committee was at once appointed to receive subscriptions for this object, and before the meeting closed, the subscriptions amounted to over \$2000. A second committee was appointed to procure plans and specifications for the new Rectory. The two committees were as follows :—

Committee on Subscriptions

Mrs. Robert M. Dunn
Mrs. Joseph B. Barry
Miss Pancoast
Mr. Arthur Wells
Mr. Charles F. Gummey
Mr. William Fraser

Committee on Plans

Mr. Charles S. Pancoast
Mr. Charles F. Gummey
Mr. William Fraser

The committee on plans and specifications chose a plan by Mr. Pearson, the cost of which was estimated at \$5500, and as the subscriptions then aggregated not quite \$3000, it was agreed that a mortgage of \$4000 should be placed upon the

¹ The amount originally promised had in the meantime been raised to \$1500 by additional subscriptions.

Rectory, and that the work of building should be at once begun. It was again largely owing to the women of the Parish, and in particular to the untiring zeal of the chairman of the committee on subscriptions, Mrs. Robert M. Dunn, that the building of the Rectory was made possible that year. Full of interest and energy, her enthusiasm was most inspiring, and the pleasure of working with her was felt by all who in any way shared her labours. On March 25, 1881, the Rectory was finished, and the Vestry were invited to visit it for their approval.

It was in March of this year that the first paid organist was employed. Hitherto, the services of the organist, and in a greater or less degree those of the choir, had been voluntary. Mr. Thomas Gummey and his brother, Mr. Charles F. Gummey, had been the first to give their services; after some years they resigned, and the organ was under the charge first of Mrs. Pancoast, and then of Mrs. Thompson. The church was next indebted to Mr. Charles O. Fraser, who continued for several years to serve the Parish in that capacity. His place was filled by Mr. Henry S. Pancoast, who resigned March 11, 1881. Since then, the music has been part of the regular expenses of the Church.

We now come to the last of the greater enterprises undertaken by St. Michael's during the

Rectorship of Dr. Murphy, namely, the erection of the Parish House. The building on Morton Street, purchased from Christ Church in 1869, had long been found to be both inconvenient and inadequate in many ways, chiefly by reason of the distance from the Church itself, to which, once a month, the school always repaired, for instruction and catechising by the Rector. Directly after the completion of the Rectory, Mr. Henry Carvill Lewis, for years the active and faithful Superintendent of the Sunday School, and devoted to its interests, presented a Resolution in the Vestry that the building on Morton Street be offered for sale, and in February, 1884, it was sold to Mr. Thomas P. Cope, Jr., for the sum of \$2500. On July 19 of the same year, the committee was authorized to contract with Mr. Pearson to undertake the work of the new building, on the Church lot, for a sum not exceeding \$5850. To complete the sum needed, a mortgage of \$2000 was placed upon the building, which, with the money received from the sale of the Morton Street property, and some few subscriptions, was sufficient to complete the amount needed.

The building was finished in April, 1885, and in 1887 the payment of this mortgage was made possible by a gift of \$1000 from Mr. Frank J. Firth, "in memory of the late William M. Lloyd's inter-

est in the Church." This gift was made on condition that the remaining \$1000 be raised within a stated time. This was done largely through the efforts of the Order of St. Paul, a society for young men which had recently been established in the Parish, and the mortgage was paid in full, October 1, 1888. The Order of St. Paul was one of several organizations which had grown out of the Band of St. Michael. This latter was founded in 1873, by Miss Agnes M. Lambdin. It was modelled upon a society in England, and was, so far as we know, the first of its kind in this country, now so rich in boys' guilds of every sort. It was intended as a Church Society for boys over twelve years of age, and its aim was primarily to give the members personal religious instruction, with a view to their approaching Confirmation and admission to the Holy Communion, and to interest them in some definite and suitable work for the Church. Its rules were very simple. The members were required to be of good moral character, never to use profane language nor frequent the company of those who did, never to laugh at sacred things, to attend Church at least once on Sunday, and to be reverent in behaviour while there, to use certain Collects daily, and to bear in mind the rules of the Band. The founder, Miss Lambdin, had a wonderful influence over the boys; she spared neither

time nor strength on their behalf; and with no elaborate organization or rules, the Band did a wonderful work among its members, making them earnestly strive to be, as their rule said, "good soldiers of Christ." The two objects may be stated briefly to have been—the increase of personal religion among the members, and work for the Church to which they belonged. Among the latter, we may mention two of the gifts for which we, as a Parish, are indebted to the Band of St. Michael,—the brass baptismal ewer, and the tiling of the floor in the vestibule of the Church. Several societies for boys were modelled upon this organization—notably the Band of St. Ambrose, connected with St. Timothy's Church, Roxborough, and the annual service of each was always attended by the others, with badges and banners, as the boys marched in procession after their leader. The work accomplished by the Band of St. Michael in those early years of its history was substantial and far-reaching, the results of the work of its founder can never be fully known in this world. From the Band of St. Michael, in part, sprang also the Mermaid Club, a literary association founded in 1877 by Mr. Henry S. Pancoast. Although it is now an independent organization, it was for many years counted as belonging to St. Michael's, and its receptions and

general meetings were held in the Parish House, by the courtesy of the Rector, who was himself deeply interested in its work. For twenty-five years it has held weekly meetings, from October until June, under the constant care and supervision of its Founder, devoting its evenings to the careful study of English Literature.

St. Margaret's Guild was founded in 1887, and still continues to meet regularly. For years it supported St. Andrew's scholarship, in Bishop Hare's Diocese, besides sending away a yearly box to some mission field. St. Elizabeth's Guild was founded in 1895, and does good work both at home and abroad, frequently supplying many Parish needs.

On December 11, 1885, the last member of the original Vestry of St. Michael's, Mr. Charles S. Pancoast, died at his home in Germantown. A minute of the Vestry records that "from the very first establishment of this Parish, Mr. Pancoast was earnestly and actively identified with its formation and progress; and that throughout its whole history until the close of his life, he was its unfailing friend and supporter. . . . Throughout the community he was always recognized as a well-informed and loyal churchman; a thoughtful and deeply read scholar; a faithful and true citizen; a thorough and accomplished Christian gentleman.

For twenty-seven years, from the Second Sunday in Advent, 1858, to the Friday of the week following the Second Sunday in Advent, 1885, his honoured name appears upon the parochial records as ever ready to take part in any good word and work."

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There was established about this time a fund, known as the Esther Odin Wallbridge Fund, the interest of which was to be used for the poor of the Parish. This fund was originally \$500, left by Mrs. Wallbridge by will. To this her husband added \$500. In October, 1889, \$200 was received from the estate of the late Henry Carvill Lewis, for use of the Sunday School; the interest of which has been used ever since for the Sunday School Library.

The Sunday School, now under the charge of Mr. Herbert Welsh, was fast outgrowing the limits of the building provided for its use in 1885. Mr. Herbert Welsh, who had for some years been the Superintendent of the School, early in 1891 called the attention of the Vestry to the need of larger accommodations. The Vestry thought favourably of the matter, and an Enlargement Fund was started by the gift of about \$200 from Mr. Henry S. Pancoast, being the proceeds of a course of lectures on English Poetry delivered in Germantown by Mr. Pancoast for this object. The next work undertaken for the Fund was a Fair, the idea of which

originated with St. Margaret's Guild. In this the Guild had the cordial support and sympathy of the Sunday School teachers, and of many of its friends among the congregation, and the result was that on May 6, 1892, we find a vote of thanks to St. Margaret's Guild for its donation of \$982.61 to the Fund for the Enlargement of the Parish House. It was about this time that the services of a lady who should act as Parish Visitor were secured, and from 1891 to 1895, when the Rector engaged the Rev. William Bernard Gilpin as his assistant, the position of Parish Visitor was filled by Miss M. S. Grider. Shortly after the appointment of the Curate, the services of the Parish Visitor were dispensed with.

On January 1, 1893, Dr. Murphy completed the twenty-fifth year of his Rectorship of St. Michael's Church, and his people were desirous to mark the occasion by some appropriate recognition of his long and faithful services among them, by which the interests of the Parish had been greatly advanced, and in which he had so universally won their love and respect. A Reception was arranged, therefore, to take place in the Parish House, which was tastefully decorated throughout for the occasion. Invitations were sent to the Rectors of the neighbouring churches, and a large number of people were present.

In July, 1896, the resignation of the Rev. William Bernard Gilpin was announced to the Vestry by the Rector, Mr. Gilpin having accepted a call to a church in Boston. The Vestry expressed their great regret at the departure of Mr. Gilpin and their appreciation of his earnest and devoted work in the Parish, "by which he has so deeply attached every member and officer of the congregation." Mr. Gilpin's work among the children and young men of the Parish is especially named. Mr. Gilpin's position as Curate was filled by the Rev. Arthur Wilson Wilde, who remained until March, 1898. He was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Ward, who left the Parish in June, 1899. The Rev. Robert Benedict was appointed shortly after by the Rector, and remained until May, 1901.

St. Michael's lost, at this time, within one month, two of its most prominent Vestrymen, Mr. Charles F. Gummey and Mr. William Fraser. Mr. Gummey had been a member of the Vestry since 1864, and in 1874 he became Accounting Warden, continuing in that "most self-denying work for fourteen years, with a record as blameless as it was generous." He died on Christmas Eve, 1898. Mr. Fraser was elected Vestryman in 1865, and chosen by the Rector to be his Warden in 1890, which position he held at the time of his death, January 16, 1899.

The Minute of the Vestry passed after this double loss is very full of appreciation of both men, so "faithful in the discharge of their duties both to the Church and to the world."

We come now to the last event of special note which occurred during Dr. Murphy's Rectorship, and which seems a fitting close to those years of honoured service which he spent among us. We have followed the growth of the Parish more or less closely, and have seen how greatly it had prospered during the thirty years of his ministry. It was now nearly fifty years since his entrance upon the ministry of the Church, and his people felt a great desire to suitably observe the occasion. A reception was decided upon by some of the ladies of the Parish, who signified their wish to the Vestry, asking that any balance remaining from subscriptions to the expenses of this entertainment should be appropriated as a gift to Dr. Murphy in token of the affection and esteem of his parishioners. In response to this request, the Vestry sent the committee a cordial assurance of their hearty coöperation and support. It was my privilege, as chairman of the ladies' committee, to receive the money for this object, and the many evidences of respect and affection thus manifested were most gratifying. Subscriptions, large and small, came without solicitation from the people of the Parish,

but the most remarkable instances were those from without the fold who begged to be allowed to share our "golden anniversary," and the small sums from our own poor people, sometimes less than a dollar, which were truly the "mite" from many who gave gladly all that they could spare.

The evening will be always a beautiful memory to us all. The venerable figure of the Rector, with his look of love and good will to all mankind, as he stood welcoming his own people and his brethren from without, was one of great interest, and the most touching incident of the evening was the arrival of the honoured guest, Mr. James M. Aertsen, who had known Dr. Murphy during the fifty years of his ministry, and had often worked with him in the service of the Church they both so dearly loved. His greeting was paid with open arms, and as the two men embraced and kissed each other, all present must have felt the sacredness of that meeting.

At the close of the evening a purse containing \$500 in gold was handed to the Rector; this was afterward increased to \$1000, an offering of love from his people and his friends.

I here quote from the Minutes of the Vestry, and from Dr. Murphy's own letter following:—

"*Whereas*, This fifteenth day of June, 1899, marks the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination

of the Rev. John K. Murphy, now Rector of this Church ;

“Resolved, That in recognition thereof the Vestry of St. Michael's Church offer to Dr. Murphy their sincere and affectionate congratulations. Of this long half century of work nearly thirty-two years of loving and devoted service have been bestowed upon this Parish. They have been years of slow but steady growth in material prosperity, until this Church can now be pointed to as a successful Free Church without deficit and without incumbrance. They have been years of peace, in which the people have learned to work together in harmony for the common good. They have been years of growing sympathy, in which the people have learned to know and appreciate their faithful minister, in which his kindness, his wise and godly counsel, his help in trouble, have made many burdens lighter, and have bound his people to him in growing and enduring affection.”

The following Minute by the Rector was ordered to be appended to this record, and it is here given in full :

“The Rector desires to record, as a matter of Parochial History as well as of personal experience, his deep and grateful sense of the kindness so generally and so generously extended to him by the members of the Vestry and of the congre-

gation of St. Michael's Church on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the ministry. He is quite unable to express his appreciation of the many tokens of affectionate interest and esteem that were shown him in celebrating that event. His entrance into Holy Orders took place June 15, 1849, and the committee of the Vestry and of the ladies of the Parish communicated to the Rector their desire to commemorate that date by a semi-centennial observance of it, June 21, 1899. In response to an invitation to meet the Rector, a reception was arranged for him in the Parish Building. Very many notes of acceptance were returned, and numerous letters of regret and of congratulation were received from clergymen and friends, far and near. The reception was attended by a throng of nearly three hundred parishioners and others, who greeted the Rector and his wife with the warmest words of loving regard. A number of substantial gifts were made to the Rector in kind by individuals, and, as an offering in common, a purse was handed to the Rector at the close of the evening containing a sum of money that was afterward made up to the amount of \$1000. The heart of your Rector, now in the thirty-second year of his ministry among you, was made more than glad by all these evidences of his people's and friends'

loving sentiments towards him; and he desires therefore to place among the Minutes of the Vestry this small expression of his heart-felt thanks, and an assurance that his prayers are constantly offered for their welfare and prosperity, here and hereafter.

“AUGUST 30, 1899.”

With this Minute ends the record of the events of interest during Dr. Murphy's long Rectorship. His health, which had been gradually failing for two years, led his Vestry to consider seriously the question of how best to relieve him of what all felt was becoming a burden “too heavy for him to bear.” But before any definite arrangement as to his successor had been completed his release from his earthly labours had come.

On the night of Saturday, October 20, 1900, Dr. Murphy entered into rest, and it was indeed a sorrowing people that gathered in the Church the next morning to hear of their great loss. The Minute of the Vestry, which is quoted here, will best express the deep affection in which he was held.

“*Whereas*, It has been God's will to take into His peace John Kemper Murphy, for fifty-one years the good and faithful servant of Christ in his ministry, and for the past thirty-two years and more the beloved Rector of this Parish;

“Resolved, That we, the Wardens and Vestry of St. Michael’s Church, desire to put upon record our sense of the great loss that we, together with the members of this Parish, and with many outside its limits and the limits of our communion, have been called upon to bear ;

“Resolved, That while we recognize the greatness of his loss to us and to many of all sorts and conditions, we record also our thankfulness for the loving service of Dr. Murphy among us for so many years ; thankfulness for years during which he was to many a constant and devoted friend ; a bringer of cheerfulness and courage ; a strength in sickness, and a helper in the time of trouble ; years during which, not only by his teaching, filled with the results of a wide and careful scholarship, and illuminated by human sympathy and the inspiration of faith, but also by a daily life of holiness, gentleness, and loving charity, he spread about him the spirit of peace and good will towards all men.”

A memorial service to Dr. Murphy was held in St. Michael’s Church, St. Andrew’s Day, 1900, under the auspices of the Convocation of Germantown. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Newlin. It was a beautiful tribute to the late Rector, and also a brief history of his life and work.

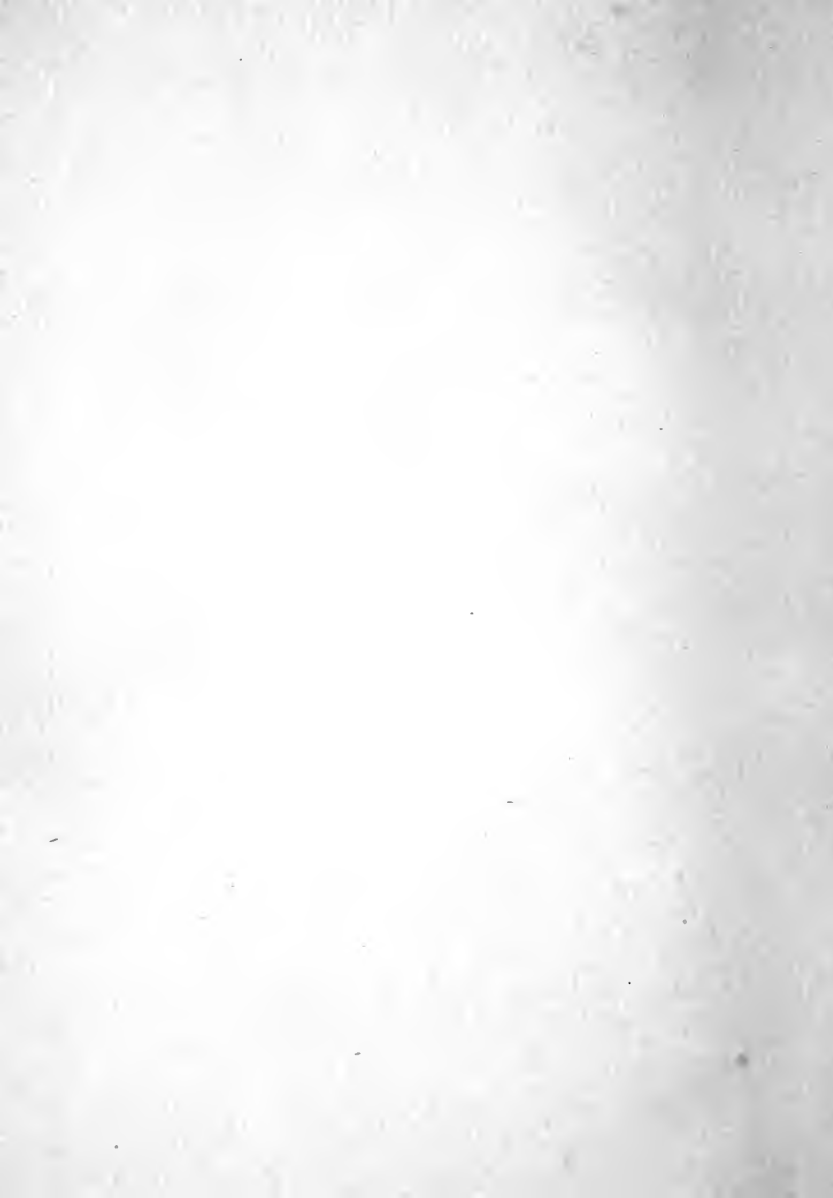
With the conclusion of Dr. Murphy's Rectorship this brief account of St. Michael's closes. On the first of January, 1901, the Rev. Arnold Harris Hord became Rector of the Parish, and its future, under his care, is one of great promise. As opportunities for work increase and methods of work multiply, so, no doubt, will its usefulness and its influence steadily keep pace with the demands.

It rests with us to see that we prove ourselves worthy successors of those who, having "loved and laboured for St. Michael's" have gone to their Eternal Rest. We have read the record of their toils and of their triumphs. Shall we be worthy of their work, and of them?

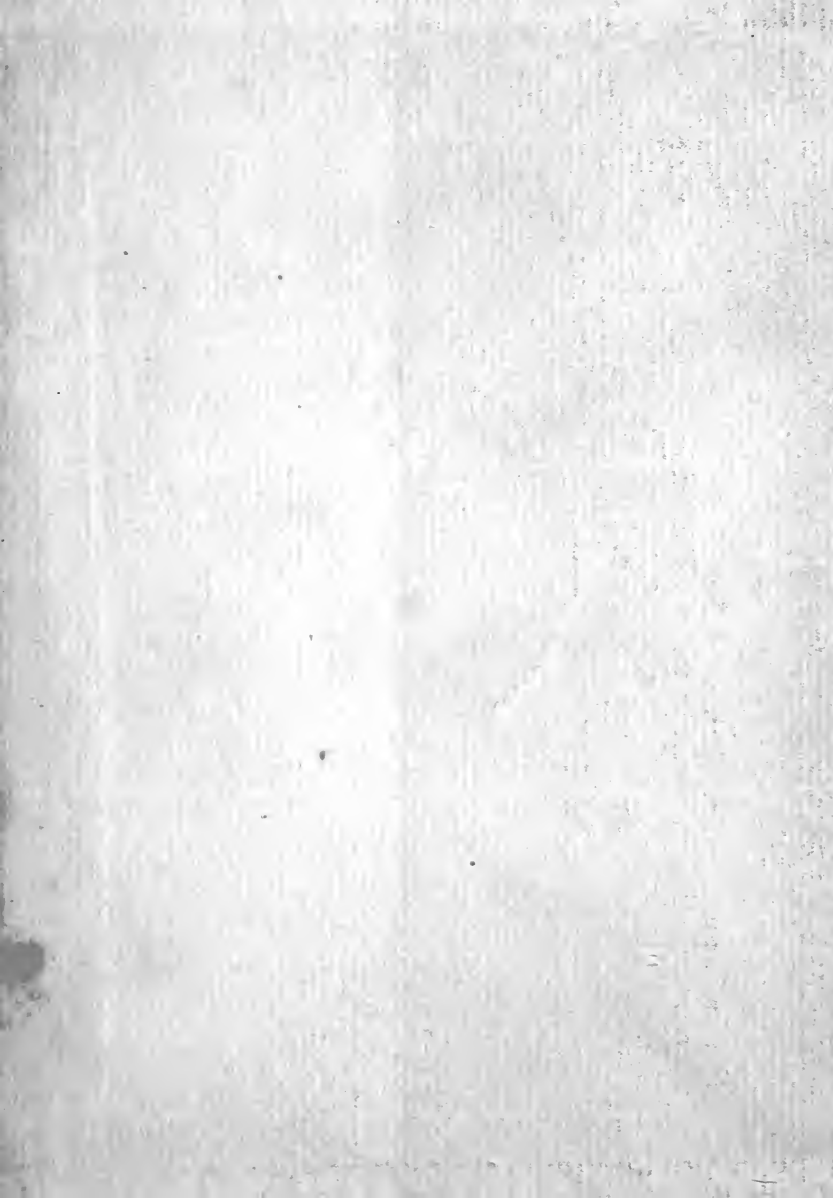
MICHAELMAS, 1902.











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A short history of St. Michael's church,
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